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Department of State POL 17 US-IRAQ
TELEGRAM

INDICATE:

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STATE _____

SUBJ: REPR: US Personnel for Baghdad Interests Section

1. As Embassy aware, following break in US-Iraq diplomatic relations both countries agreed by exchange of diplomatic notes dated August 30, 1967, and September 14, 1967, to establish on basis of reciprocity Interests Sections in their respective capitals consisting of one Third Secretary and two non-diplomatic personnel. For various reasons, including unwillingness assign inexperienced junior diplomatic officer, we have not rpt not chosen exercise our right in this regard. Iraq, however, not only has done so but has over years without seeking prior agreement escalated rank of its diplomatic representative to First Secretary and, in addition to one non-diplomatic "accountant" has also recently assigned Cultural Attache, diplomatic position not provided for by existing agreement. We have not rpt not made issue of these developments

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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

June 21, 2006

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in order enable us designate higher ranking diplomatic officer if and when decision finally made send Americans to Baghdad.

2. We now believe time suitable to assign American personnel to man US Interests Section in Baghdad because (a) American commercial interest in Iraq has recently been growing due to Iraq's relatively good financial position as result of increased oil revenues over last year; (b) Department's desire for more regular and analytic political and economic reporting from Iraq as well as for ~~xx~~ closer administrative control over Interests Section as a whole.

3. In view of above, Department now envisages assignment sometime during this summer of one junior FSO-3 or senior FSO-4 Arab area and language officer and one FSS-5 Administrative Assistant, whose wife/~~whom~~^{would} also work. We doubt that the Iraqi Government would react negatively to assignment these persons in view of presence Iraqi

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diplomats in Washington. If they do object, it would mean, of course, that we would then be obliged to request withdrawal their personnel in Washington.

4. Before proceeding inform GOI of our decision, we wish consult with Belgians re procedure and timing, We particularly desire views of Ambassador Van de Kerchove who during last spring Washington consultations on Baghdad property problem welcomed idea of assignment of Americans to Interests Section.

5. Embassy, therefore, authorized inform Belgian Government of our desire assign American personnel to Baghdad Interests Section and consult as above. Embassy should indicate in general terms reasons for this decision as given above but without in any way implying any US dissatisfaction with Belgian administration of US Interests Section affairs. In addition, Embassy may inform Belgians that US intends maintain low profile in Baghdad and for that reason we intend keep our personnel

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in Interests Section for quite some time limited to personnel as indicated above. Finally, Embassy should express USG interest meet with Belgians in near future in order discuss in more specific terms how we and they will arrange working relationship between Belgian Embassy in ~~Baghdad~~ Baghdad and American officers in Interests Section.

END

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